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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, WHA/EPSC STATE FOR
INR/IAA, PM, INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - BOLIVIA, VENEZUELA AND THE UNITED STATES

¶1. Block quotes of September 13-15 commentaries and editorials in Santiago dailies on Bolivia, Venezuela, and the United States

¶2. "El Mercurio," conservative, influential newspaper-of-record (circ. 129,000, 9/15) editorial entitled, "Crossroads in hemispheric relations":

"In Venezuela, the perception is that Chavez' harsh remarks are tied to the upcoming regional election in which he could face defeat.... Chavez knows how to take advantage of the strong international opposition to the U.S. President... and cheer up those whose sectors who feel excluded. And in this regard Bolivia is fertile ground, because of its internal divisions and complexity of regional, economic, social and racial elements that seem to generate discontent among many sectors. Morales is viewed by some as a option for change."

¶3. "La Tercera," conservative, independent (Sat. circ. 195,626, 9/13) Column by Jos Rodrguez Elizondo, "Chavez and Unasur's Debut":

"Chavez' method is to use a crisis in the neighborhood to create as much division as possible and then intervene.... But this time he has gone too far... by going from the personal insult of President Bush to the collective insult, 'f... Yankees....' It's no wonder that the independents convoked for Unasur's meeting -- Lula, Uribe, and Alan Garca -- are not enthused... because Chavez' blatant intervention in Bolivia and his verbal attack on the United States have left several actors in a difficult position: The OAS with little room in which to maneuver; President Bachelet ... who knows that Chile is on Chavez' black list since (former president) Ricardo Lagos' expressed support for the frustrated 2002 coup...; and Lula, who until now has patiently and wisely dodged clashes with Chavez.... But Brazil is running out of gas and is therefore truly interested in finding a solution for Bolivia and less in the Venezuelan leader's eventual electoral victories."

¶4. "El Mercurio," conservative, influential, newspaper-of-record (Sat. circ. 173,049, 9/13) column by former Ambassador to the U.S., Hernn Felipe Errazuriz:

"Presidents Evo Morales and Hugo Chavez have always looked for ways to stay in power and have supported each other in this.... Their own people don't seem to matter; Only ideology does. And now they have taken a more radical stance in their relationship with the United States by expelling two distinguished U.S. ambassadors.... There's still time (for Chile) to move away from these two unpredictable presidents."

¶5. "La Nacion," government-owned, editorially independent (Sun. circ. 16,200, 9/14) column by journalist Rafael Cavada:

"What has changed so much that we immediately rule out a possible U.S. intervention in Bolivia and Venezuela?.... Venezuela rests on a sea of oil and Bolivia sits on a giant gas tank, and energy is today the one investment that will yield more profit in the future.... It might seem outdated to talk about financing coup d'tats abroad, but the word 'protectorate' is much older and that

is just what Bush installed in Iraq -- another oil-rich country--
just five years ago.

URBAN